United States Environmental Protection Agency

ToxCast™: EPAs Contribution to the Tox21 Consortium

California Institute of Regenerative Medicine
Berkeley, California

Office of Research and Development
National Center for Computational Toxicology

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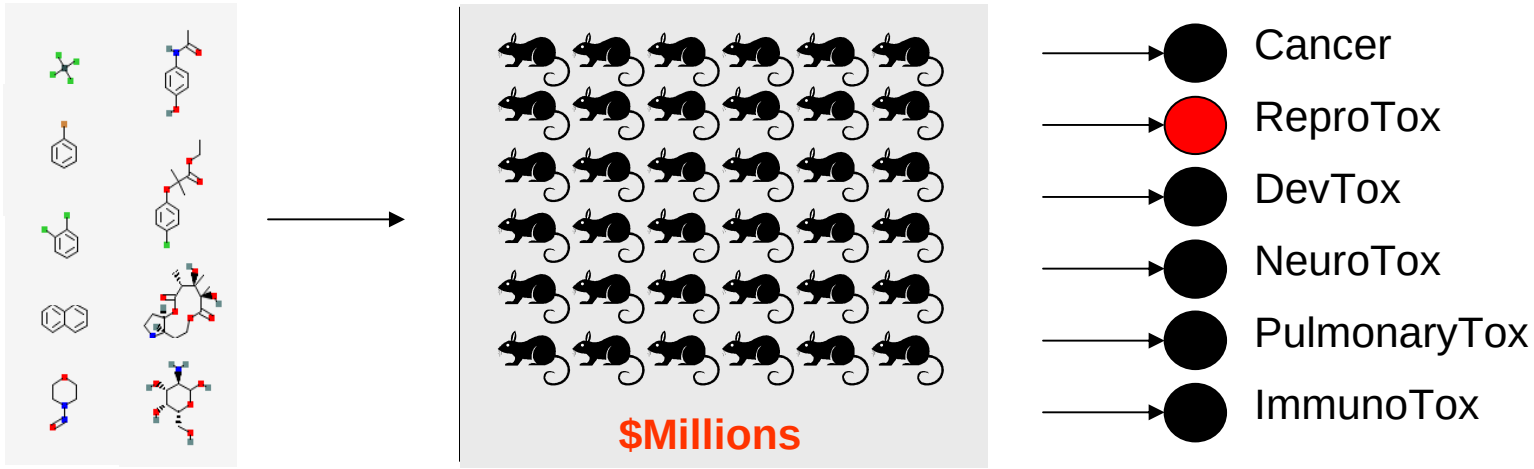
United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

"…to integrate modern computing and information technology with molecular biology to improve Agency prioritization of data requirements and risk assessment of chemicals"

www.epa.gov/ncct

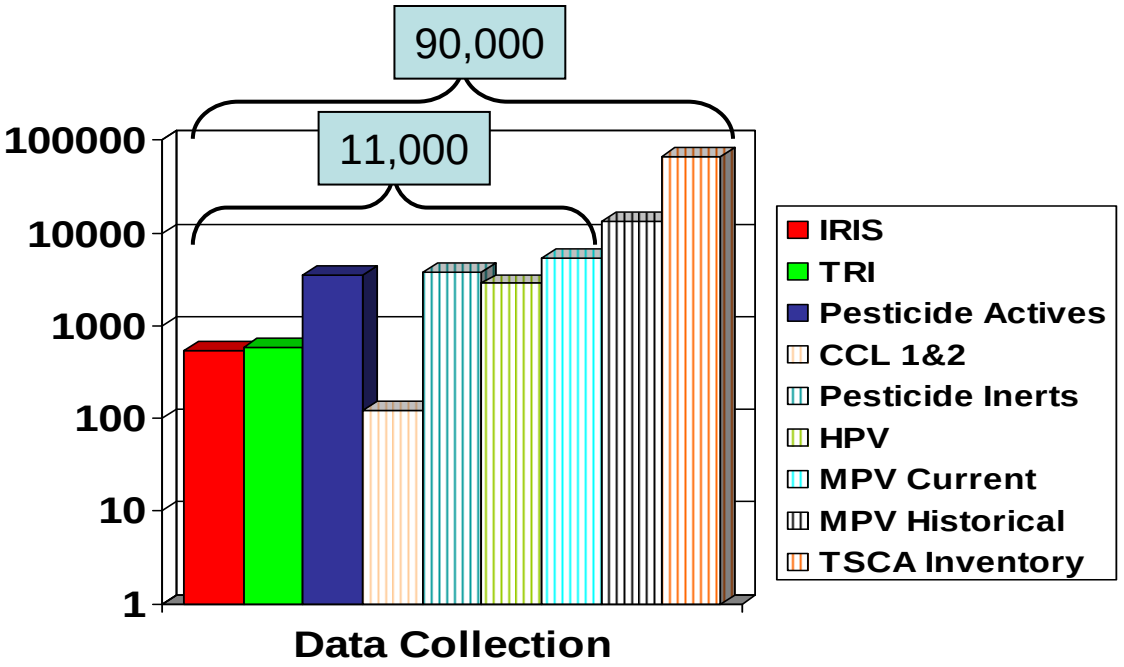
Current Approach for Toxicity Testing

in vivo testing

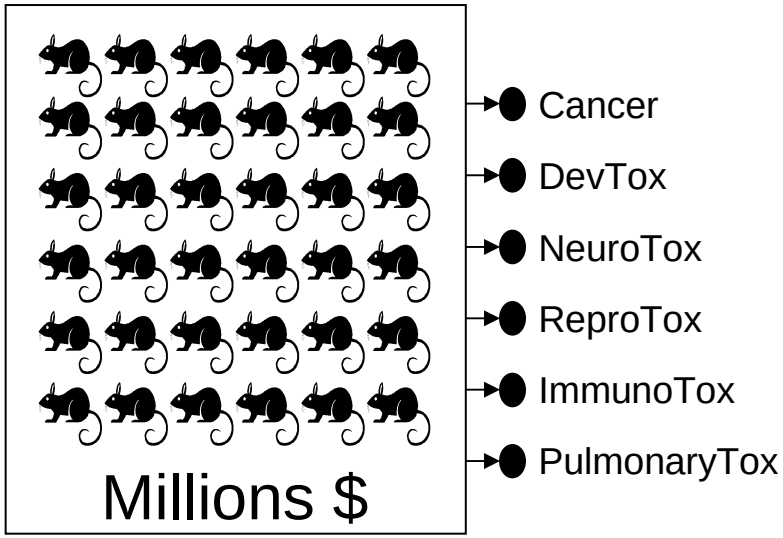


Putting Numbers on the Problem

Too Many Chemicals

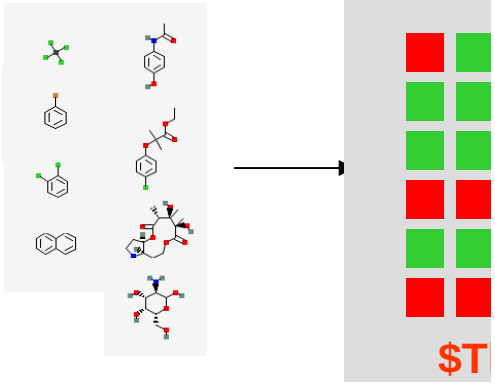


Too High a Cost



…and not enough data.

Future of Toxicity Testing



POLICYFORUM

TOXICOLOGY

Transforming Environmental Health Protection

We propose a shift from primarily in vivo animal studies to in vitro assays, in vivo assays with lower organisms, and computational modeling for toxicity assessments.

Francis S. Collins,[1*†] George M. Gray,[2*] John R. Bucher[3*]

In 2005, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), with support from the U.S. National Toxicology Program (NTP), funded a project at the National Research Council (NRC) to develop a long-range vision for toxicity testing and a strategic plan for implementing that vision. Both agencies wanted future toxicity testing and assessment paradigms to meet evolving regulatory needs. Challenges include the large numbers of substances that need to be tested and how to incorporate recent advances in molecular toxicology, computational sciences, and information technology; to rely increasingly on human as opposed to animal data; and to offer increased efficiency in design and costs (*1*–*5*). In response, the NRC Committee on Toxicity Testing and Assessment of Environmental Agents produced two reports that reviewed current toxicity testing, identified key issues, and developed a vision and implementation strategy to create a major shift in the assessment of chemical hazard and risk (*6*, *7*). Although the NRC reports have laid out a solid theoretical rationale, comprehensive and rigorously gathered data (and comparisons with historical animal data) will determine whether the hypothesized improvements will be realized in practice. For this purpose, NTP, EPA, and the National Institutes of Health Chemical Genomics Center (NCGC) (organizations with expertise in experimental toxicology, computational toxicology, and high-throughput technologies, respectively) have established a collaborative research program.

EPA, NCGC, and NTP Joint Activities

In 2004, the NTP released its vision and roadmap for the 21st century (*1*), which established initiatives to integrate high-throughput screening (HTS) and other automated screening assays into its testing program. In 2005, the EPA established the National Center for Computational Toxicology (NCCT). Through these initiatives, NTP and EPA, with the NCGC, are promoting the evolution of toxicology from a predominantly observational science at the level of disease-specific models in vivo to a predominantly predictive science focused on broad inclusion of target-specific, mechanism-based, biological observations in vitro (*1*, *4*) (see figure, below).

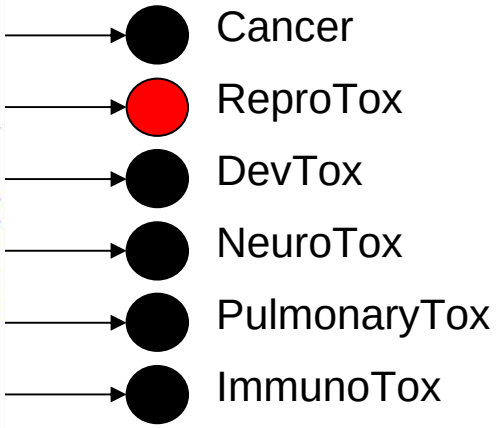
Toxicity pathways. In vitro and in vivo tools are being used to identify cellular responses after chemical exposure expected to result in adverse health effects (*7*). HTS methods are a primary means of discovery for drug development, and screening of >100,000 compounds per day is routine (*8*). However, drug-discovery HTS methods traditionally test compounds at one concentration, usually between 2 and 10 μM, and tolerate high false-negative rates. In contrast, in the EPA, NCGC, and NTP combined effort, all compounds are tested at as many as 15 concentrations, generally ranging from ~5 nM to ~100 μM, to generate a concentration-response curve (*9*). This approach is highly reproducible, produces significantly lower false-positive and false-negative rates than the traditional HTS methods (*9*), and facilitates multiassay comparisons. Finally, an informatics platform has been built to compare results among HTS screens; this is being expanded to allow comparisons with historical toxicologic NTP and EPA data (http://ncgc.nih.gov/pub/openhts). HTS data collected by EPA and NTP, as well as by the NCGC and other Molecular Libraries Initiative centers (http://mli.nih.gov/), are being made publicly available through Web-based databases [e.g., PubChem (http://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)]. In addition,

Transforming toxicology. The studies we propose will test whether high-throughput and computational toxicology approaches can yield data predictive of results from animal toxicity studies, will allow prioritization of chemicals for further testing, and can assist in prediction of risk to humans.

[1]Director, National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, MD 20892; [2]Assistant Administrator for the Office of Research and Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC 20460; [3]Associate Director, U.S. National Toxicology Program, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS), Research Triangle Park, NC 27709, USA.

*The views expressed here are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of their respective agencies.

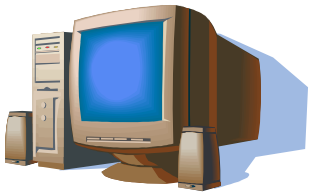
†Author for correspondence. E-mail: francisc@mail.nih.gov



NCGC Tox21 EPA

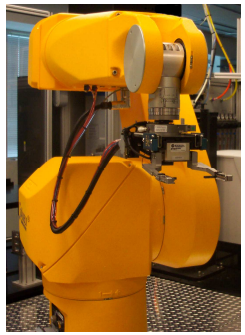
EPAs Contribution: The ToxCast Research Program

The Tox21 Consortium



National Center for Computational Toxicology

Tox21



National Toxicology Program
Department of Health and Human Services

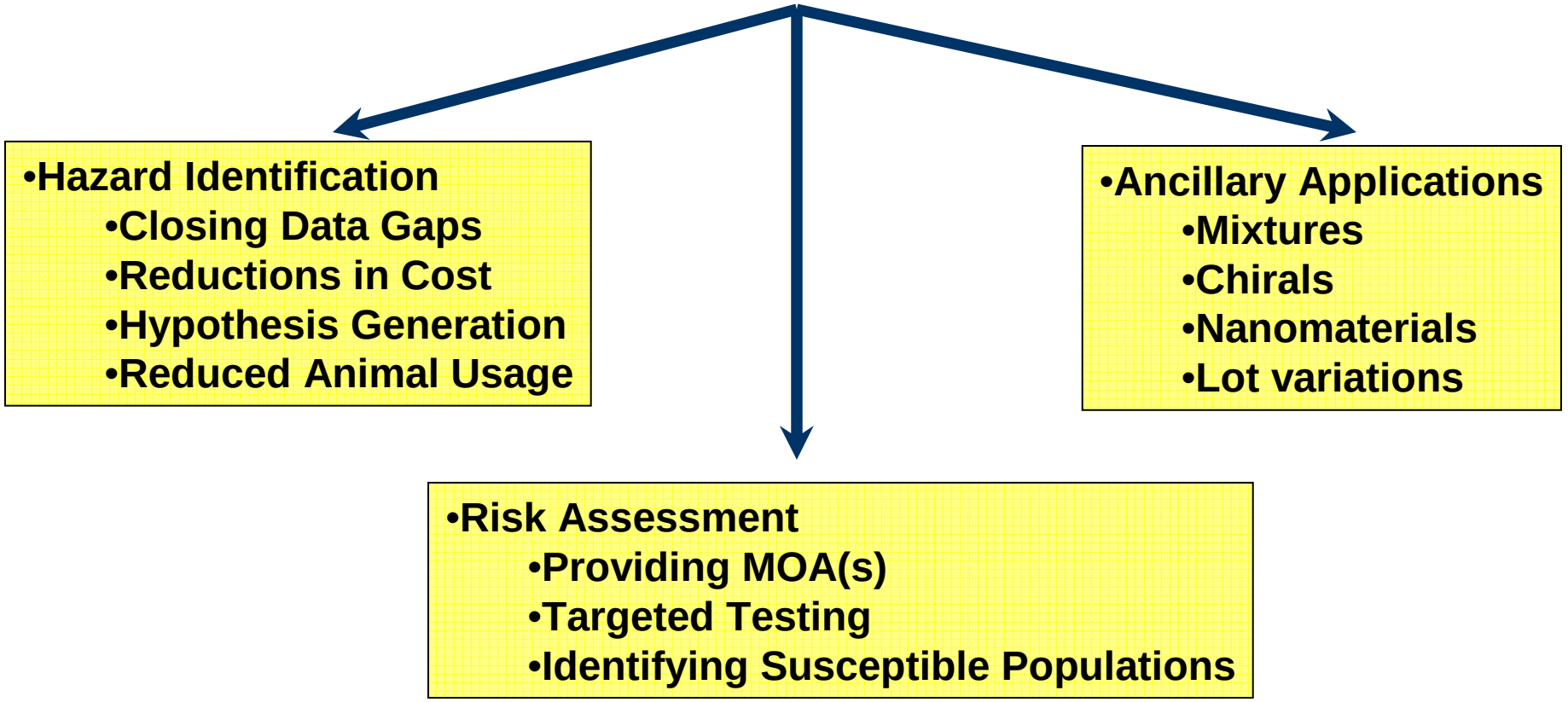
NIH Chemical Genomics Center

Biomolecular Screening Branch

Toxicology Project Team

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Implications for Success



Key Challenges

- Find the Toxicity Pathways
  - Hepato vs developmental
- Obtain HTS Assays for Them
  - Including metabolic capability
- Screen Chemical Libraries
  - Coverage of p-chem properties
- Link Results to in vivo Effects
  - Gold standard and dosimetry

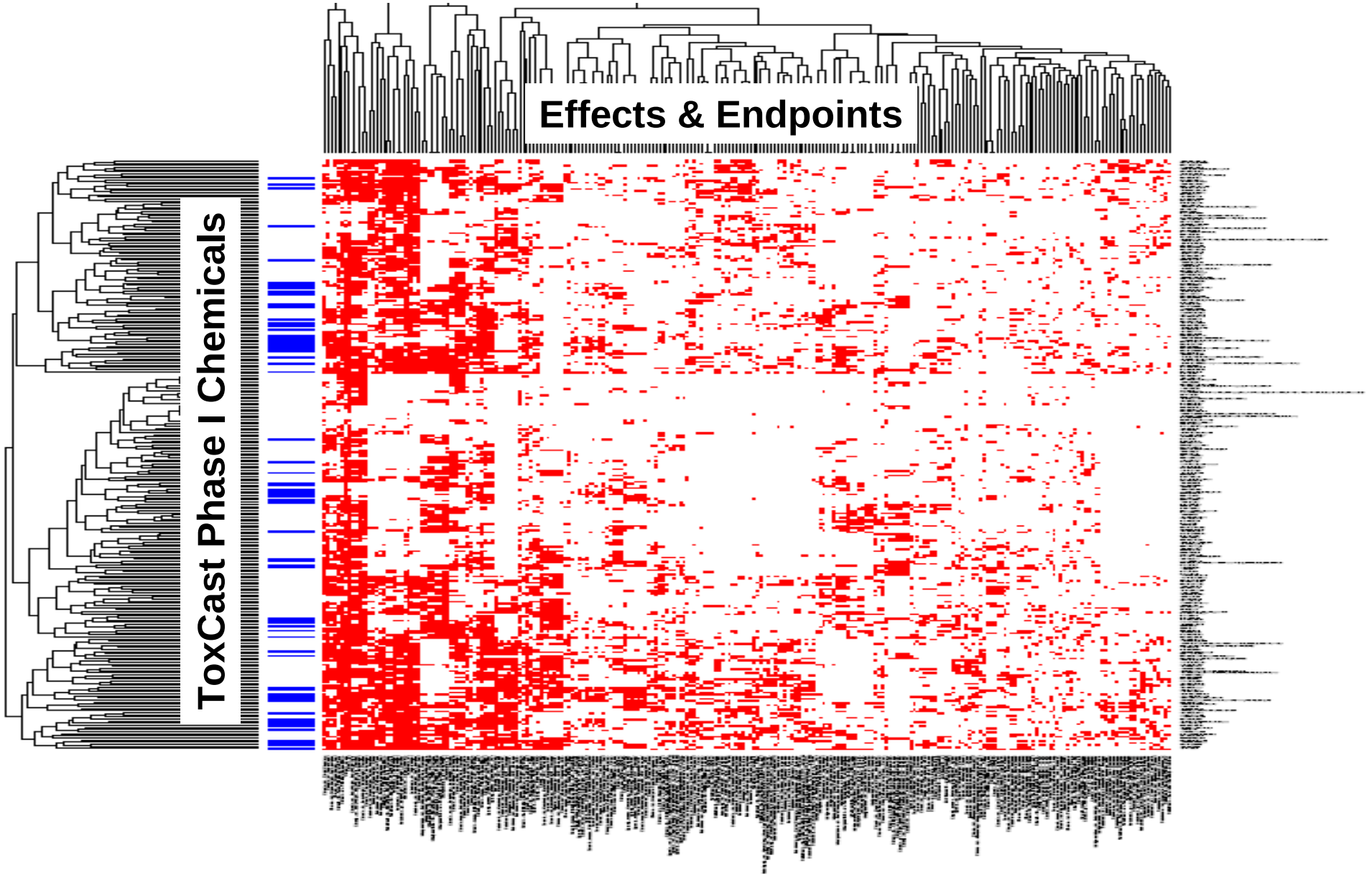
Phased Development of ToxCast

Phase	Number of Chemicals	Chemical Criteria	Purpose	Number of Assays	Cost per Chemical	Target Date
I	320	Data Rich (pesticides)	Signature Development	>400	$20k	FY07-08
IIa	>300	Data Rich Chemicals	Validation	>400	$15-20k	FY09
IIb	>100	Known Human Toxicants	Extrapolation	>400	$15-20k	FY09
IIc	>300	Expanded Structure and Use Diversity	Extension	>400	$15-20k	FY10
III	Thousands	Data poor	Prediction and Prioritization	???	$10-15k	FY11-12

- Affordable science-based system for categorizing chemicals
- Increasing confidence as database grows
- Identifies potential mechanisms of action
- Refines and reduces animal use for hazard ID and risk assessment

$400 Million Dollars Worth of *In Vivo* Chronic/Cancer Bioassay Effects and Endpoints

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency



Evolution of Phase I

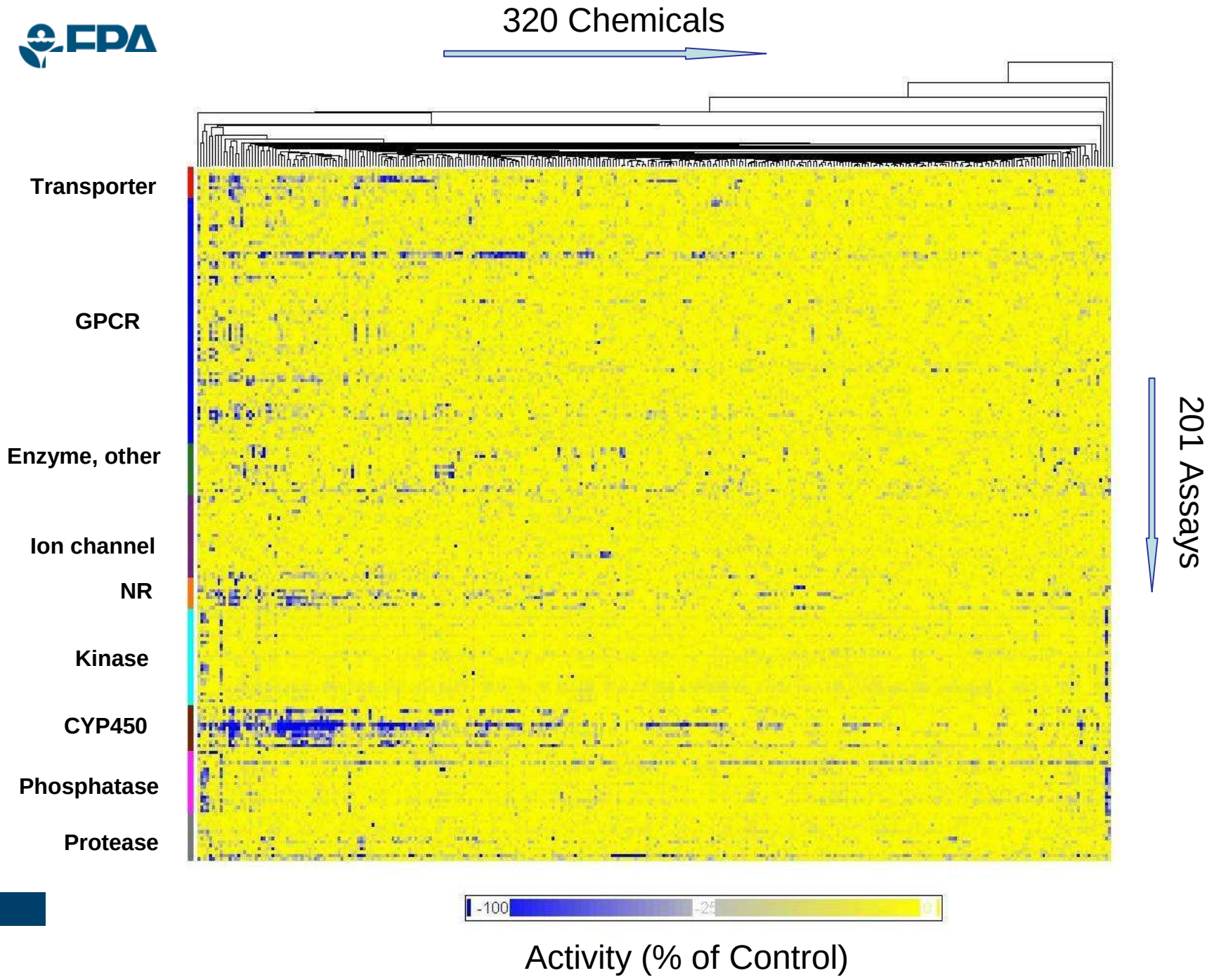
- **ToxCast 1.0 (April, 2007)**
  - *Enzyme inhibition/receptor binding HTS (Novascreen)*
  - *NR/transcription factors (Attagene, NCGC)*
  - *Cellular impedance (ACEA)*
  - *Complex cell interactions (BioSeek)*
  - *Hepatocelluar HCS (Cellumen)*
  - *Hepatic, renal and airway cytotoxicity (IVAL)*
  - *In vitro hepatogenomics (IVAL, Expression Analysis)*
  - *Zebrafish developmental toxicity (Phylonix)*
- **ToxCast 1.1 (January, 2008)**
  - *Neurite outgrowth HCS (NHEERL)*
  - *Cell proliferation (NHEERL)*
  - *Zebrafish developmental toxicity (NHEERL)*
- **ToxCast 1.2 (March, 2008)**
  - *Organ culture: liver, kidney, lung (Hamner Institutes)*
  - *HTS Genotoxicity (Gentronix)*
  - *Toxicity and signaling pathways (Invitrogen)*
  - *NR Activation and translocation (CellzDirect)*
  - *3D Cellular microarray with metabolism (Solidus)*
  - *C. elegans (NIEHS)*
  - *Functional markers from microscale cultured hepatocytes (MIT)*

9 Assay Sources & 412 Endpoints

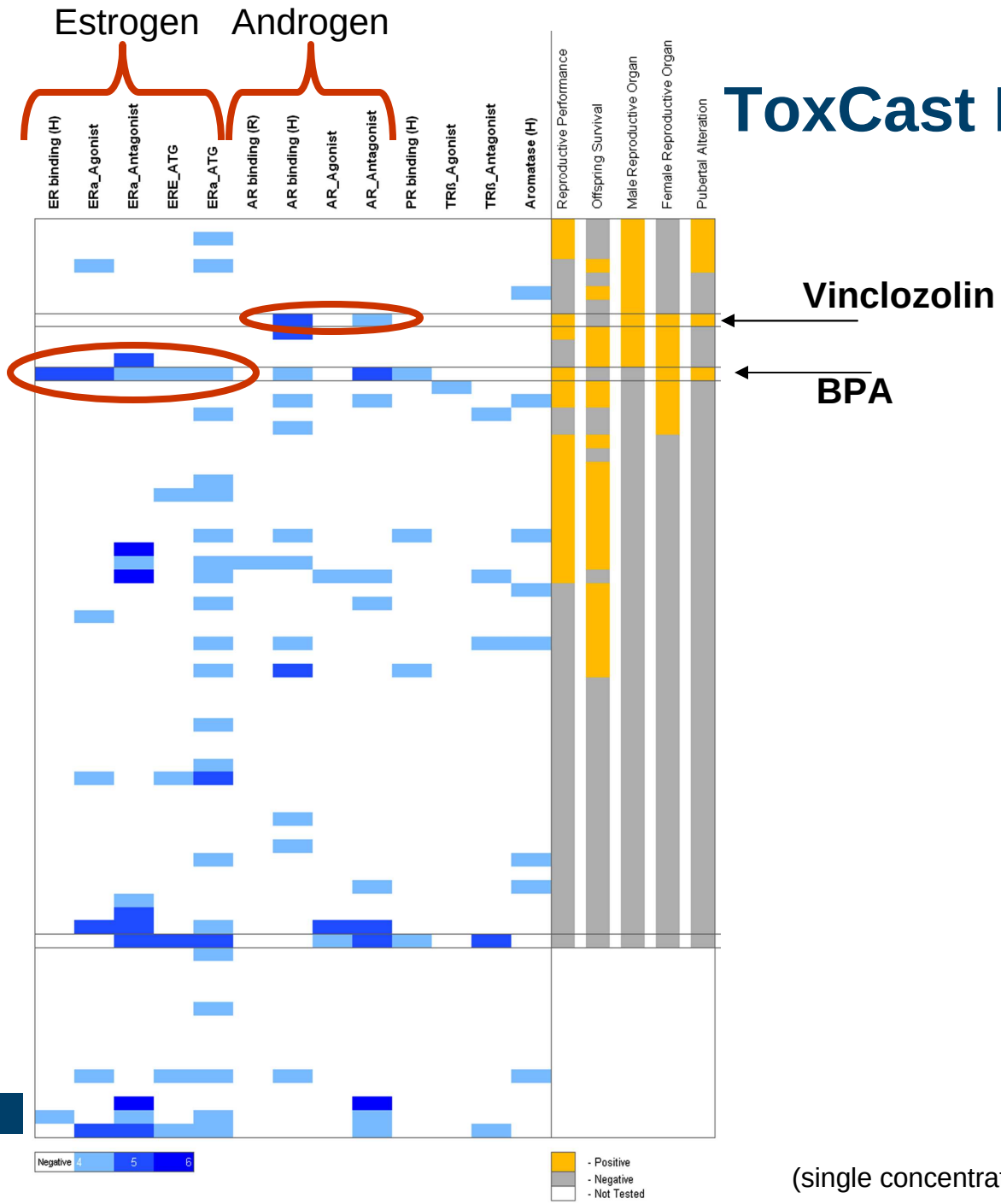
+3 Assay Sources & 16 Endpoints

+7 Assay Sources & 123 Endpoints

19 Assay Sources, 551 Endpoints


320 Chemicals
Transporter
GPCR
Enzyme, other
Ion channel
NR
Kinase
CYP450
Phosphatase
Protease
201 Assays
-100
Activity (% of Control)

ToxCast Endocrine Profiling



HTS Data from receptor binding (Novascreen), single gene reporter (NCGC) response element activation (Attagene) for the proposed Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program Priority Chemicals contained in the ToxCast 320

(single concentration only for binding and transcription factors)

ToxCast Website: www.epa.gov/ncct/toxcast

ToxCast™ Program

Predicting Hazard, Characterizing Toxicity Pathways, and Prioritizing the Toxicity Testing of Environmental Chemicals

Introduction

ToxCast™ Navigation

- Introduction
- ToxCast™ Chemicals
- ToxCast™ Assays
- ToxCast™ Information Management
- ToxCast™ Partnerships
- ToxCast™ Contractors
- ToxCast™ Presentations
- ToxCast™ Publications
- ToxCast™ News

In 2007, EPA launched ToxCast™ in order to develop a cost-effective approach for prioritizing the toxicity testing of large numbers of chemicals in a short period of time. Using data from state-of-the-art high throughput screening (HTS) bioassays developed in the pharmaceutical industry, ToxCast™ is building computational models to forecast the potential human toxicity of chemicals. These hazard predictions will provide EPA regulatory programs with science-based information helpful in prioritizing chemicals for more detailed toxicological evaluations, and lead to more efficient use of animal testing.

In its first phase, ToxCast™ is profiling over 300 well-characterized chemicals (primarily pesticides) in over 400 HTS endpoints. These endpoints include biochemical assays of protein function, cell-based transcriptional reporter assays, multi-cell interaction assays, transcriptomics on primary cell cultures, and developmental assays in zebrafish embryos. Almost all of the compounds being examined in Phase 1 of ToxCast™ have been tested in traditional toxicology tests, including developmental toxicity, multi-generation studies, and sub-chronic and chronic rodent bioassays. ToxRefDB, a relational database being created to house this information, will contain nearly $1B worth of toxicity studies in animals when completed. ToxRefDB is integrated into a more comprehensive data management system developed by NCCT called ACToR (Aggregated Computational Toxicology Resource), that manages the large-scale datasets of ToxCast™. ACToR is comprised of several independent data repositories linked to a common database of chemical structures and properties, and to tools for development of predictive HTS and genomic bioactivity signatures that strongly correlate with specific toxicity endpoints from ToxRefDB. These ToxCast™ signatures will be defined and evaluated by their ability to predict outcomes from existing mammalian toxicity testing, and identify toxicity pathways that are relevant to human health effects.

The second phase of ToxCast™ will screen additional compounds representing broader chemical structure and use classes, in order to evaluate the predictive bioactivity signatures developed in Phase I. Following successful conclusion of Phases I and II, ToxCast™ will provide EPA regulatory programs an efficient tool for rapidly and efficiently screening compounds and prioritizing further toxicity testing.

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Summary

- The international community needs better predictive tools for assessing the hazards and risks of chemicals
- It is technically feasible to collect bioactivity data on virtually all chemicals of potential concern
- ToxCast is providing a proof of concept for obtaining predictive, broad-based spectra of bioactivity
- A critical need remains the elucidation of the majority of key biological processes involved in toxic responses
- Developmental toxicity represents one of the greatest challenges in this regard
- The time is right to rapidly this field along